

NCDOT Division Eleven Project Solicitation and Ranking Process Prioritization 3.0



Introduction

The NCDOT Division Engineers are required by STI legislation to develop a local input methodology for all transportation projects (highway, bike and pedestrian, public transportation, aviation, rail, and ferry) within their respective areas that may compete for state funding. In conjunction with our continuous, cooperative and comprehensive planning relationship with local Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs), NCDOT Division Engineers have developed the following project solicitation process and local input methodology.

Applicability

The project solicitation process will apply to all projects submitted by the Division Engineer, and the local input methodology will apply to all projects (regional impact and division needs) to be ranked by the Division Engineer within their geographic boundaries (and adjacent boundaries if a given project spans more than one Division).

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Schedule Details

Project Solicitation:

Each transportation Division will solicit candidate projects for 30 days prior to the project submittal deadline. **The results of this process will be reviewed with each of the MPOs and RPOs in the Division, appropriate NCDOT Transit Division (all modes) staff, and local aviation, rail and public transit operators prior to submitting new candidate projects.** Project suggestions received will be shared and coordinated with the respective MPO and/or RPO in each Division and with appropriate NCDOT transit division staff to avoid duplication and ensure maximum number of project submittals per Division is not exceeded. The Division will then submit the selected project list using NCDOT's SPOT On!line tool (web based system) for quantitative scoring no later than the project submittal deadline.

Project Ranking:

The Division 11 Engineer will evaluate the full list of new and previously evaluated projects for the Division between June and August 2014 using this methodology and assigning local input points in consultation with the MPOs and RPOs in the division, and appropriate NCDOT Transit Division (all modes) staff for submission to the Strategic Prioritization Office of Transportation (SPOT) by August 29th, 2014.

Public Input Process

Project Solicitation:

The Division will announce a 30 day project solicitation period to all governments, MPOs, RPOs, NCDOT staff, local airport, rail and transit operators, and interested persons in the Division's geographic boundaries using methods approved by the NCDOT Communications Office. In addition, the Division will host public hearings at a central location within each Division during the 30 day project solicitation period. Information regarding the public hearing and specific methods for providing input (email, phone, mail, etc.) will be advertised to stakeholders using methods approved by the NCDOT Communications Office. Comments received via public hearings and other methods approved by the NCDOT Communications Office will be posted to the NCDOT website. **The results of the 30 day project solicitation period and the public input received will be reviewed by the Division Engineer in consultation with the MPOs and RPOs in the Division, appropriate NCDOT transit division staff, and local aviation, rail and transit operators.** Through this collaboration, the Division Engineer will determine the list of candidate projects to submit for technical evaluation, while avoiding duplicate project submissions and ensuring the maximum number of project submittals is not exceeded. The Division Engineer will be able to submit new transportation projects (across all modes) based upon the P3.0 Workgroup and Department's agreed upon allowances.

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Project Ranking:

The Division Engineer will receive the quantitative scores for the projects eligible for local input points in May of 2014. The Division Engineer will be responsible for assigning local input points to regional impact and division needs projects for their area (statewide mobility projects will be evaluated based solely on their technical scores). The Division Engineer will publish his/her

local input methodology which will be used as the basis to assign preliminary points to all regional impact and division needs projects within their division and/or adjacent divisions using methods approved by the NCDOT Communications Office. Each Division Engineer's office will then announce a 30 day comment period to solicit input on this information and the preliminary local input point assignments and provide specific methods for providing input (email, phone, mail, etc.) as approved by the NCDOT Communications Office. The 30 day comment period will vary by Division, and will take place during the 90 day window (June 2nd – August 29th, 2014) for assigning local input points. During this period, each Division will host public drop-in/workshop sessions at a central location within each Division prior to the final assignment of local input points by August 29, 2014. Advertisement soliciting input during the 30 day comment period and for the drop-in/workshop sessions will be made to the public and to MPOs, RPOs, NCDOT staff, local airport, rail and transit operators, and interested persons in the Division's geographic boundaries using methods approved by the NCDOT Communications Office.

The Division Engineer will review comments received in accordance with his/her local input methodology and in consultation with the MPOs and RPOs in the Division, appropriate NCDOT Transit Division (all modes) staff, and local aviation, rail and transit operators.

Through this evaluation and collaboration, the Division Engineer will determine the final local input point assignments per eligible regional impact and division needs project within their division and/or to projects in adjacent divisions to submit for final evaluation. All final point assignments will be published using methods approved by the NCDOT Communications Office.

Ranking Process

Introduction:

The criteria outlined below will be used to create a ranking of projects in the regional impact and division needs categories that will be used by the Division Engineer in determining preliminary and final local input point assignments for projects within their division and/or to projects in adjacent divisions. **The Department's quantitative scores for projects and this ranking process will act as a guide and first step in determining a preliminary rank-ordered list of projects.**

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The second step is to apply the Division Methodology to all projects in the preliminary rank-ordered list of projects. This application may reorder the ranking of the projects. The third step is to apply qualitative points to specific projects according to the methodology outlined later.

Below is the standardized list of criteria used in developing a set of ranking criteria for Division 11. The combination of criteria selected for the regional impact and division needs ranking processes is most reflective of the needs and priorities for Division 11. For each criterion selected, a detailed description is provided (including any pertinent information regarding data sets to be used). In developing the list of criteria for Division 11, a minimum of four criteria were chosen from the standardized list and the weight for each criteria is such that the total possible points for a given project is equal to 100. The Division Engineer will publish their specific set of criteria using methods approved by the NCDOT Communications Office prior to/in conjunction with posting preliminary point assignments for projects within their division and/or to projects in adjacent divisions. Below are the criteria chosen by Division 11 from the standardized list. For each criterion, a detailed description is provided (including any pertinent information regarding data sets to be used).

Standard Criteria – Descriptions:

- **Cost Effectiveness:** a calculation of the cost per vehicle to improve a road one mile. This calculation allows different types of roads to be compared based on how much it costs to improve the road per individual vehicle.
- **Corridor Continuity:** a measure of the project completing or continuing improvements on a defined transportation corridor.
- **Project Feasibility:** a qualitative measure of ROW, environmental justice and/or environmental problems on the project based on Transportation Planning Branch data or a completed feasibility study.
- **Shoulder Width:** a measure of the existing paved shoulder width versus the DOT design standard.
- **Lane Width:** a measure of the existing lane width versus the DOT design standard

Regional Impact Ranking:

Certain highway, aviation, bicycle and pedestrian, ferry, transit, and rail projects are scored at the Regional Impact level, as well as any projects that cascade into the Regional Impact category from the statewide mobility category.

Below is a the list of ranking of criteria proposed to be used by Division 11 in evaluating projects in the Regional Impact category. This combination of criteria and criteria weights best reflect the needs and priorities of this area. The resulting scores and rank order will be used by the Division Engineer in developing preliminary and final local input point

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assignments for projects within the division and/or to projects in adjacent divisions. The Department's quantitative scores for projects and this ranking process will act as a guide and first step in determining a preliminary rank-ordered list of projects. The Division Engineer will use the preliminary rank-ordered list of projects along with local knowledge as well as information gathered through collaboration and consultation with MPOs, RPOs, local airport, rail and transit operators and input from other interested stakeholders to determine the actual assignment of qualitative points.

Regional Impact Standard Ranking – Criteria and Weights					
<i>(Note: Choose minimum of four criteria and determine percent weights; total points for any given project cannot exceed 100)</i>					
Criteria	0 Points	5 Points	10 Points	15 Points	
Cost Effectiveness 15 (% weight)	Cost per Veh./equivalent greater than \$1500 per mile	Cost per Veh./equivalent between \$1000-\$1500 per mile	Cost per Veh./equivalent between \$500-\$999 per mile	Cost per Veh./equivalent less than \$499 per Mile	
Criteria	0 Points	50 Points			
Corridor Continuity 50 (% weight)	Project does not complete or continue corridor improvement	Project does continue corridor improvement			
Criteria	0 Points	25 Points			
Project Feasibility 25 (% weight)	Significant ROW, EJ or environmental concerns	Minimal ROW, EJ or environmental concerns			
Criteria	0 Points	10 Points			
Lane Width 10 (% weight)	Project does not increase lane width	Project widens lane width to DOT standard			

Division Needs Ranking:

Certain highway, aviation, bicycle and pedestrian, ferry, transit, and rail projects are scored at the Division Needs level, as well as any projects that cascade into the Division Needs category from the Regional Impact category. Each Division Engineer will use the criteria and weighting below to generate a score for each project and a ranking of all projects in the Division Needs category.

Below is the list of ranking criteria proposed to be used each Division 11 in evaluating projects in the Division Needs category. This combination of criteria and criteria weights

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best reflect the needs and priorities of this area. The resulting scores and rank order will be used by the Division Engineer in developing preliminary and final local input point assignments for projects within their division and/or to projects in adjacent divisions. The Department's quantitative scores for projects and this ranking process will act as a guide and first step in determining a preliminary rank-ordered list of projects. The Division Engineer will use the preliminary rank-ordered list of projects along with local knowledge as well as information gathered through collaboration and consultation with MPOs, RPOs, local airport, rail and transit operators and input from other interested stakeholders to determine the actual assignment of qualitative points.

Division Needs Standard Ranking – Criteria and Weights					
<i>(Note: Choose minimum of four criteria and determine percent weights; total points for any given project cannot exceed 100)</i>					
Criteria	0 Points	5 Points	10 Points	15 Points	20 Points
Cost-Effectiveness (20% weight)	Cost per daily user greater than \$4,000 per user per unit per mile	Cost per daily user between \$2,000-\$4,000 per user per unit per mile	Cost per daily user between \$1,500-\$1,999 per user per unit per mile	Cost per daily user between \$1,000-\$1,499 per user per unit per mile	Cost per daily user less than \$999 per user per unit per mile
Point Value	0 Points	40 Points			
Project Feasibility (40% weight)	Significant ROW, EJ or environmental concerns	Minimal ROW, EJ or environmental concerns			
Point Value	0 Points	5 Points	10 Points		
Shoulder Width (20% weight)	Project does not widen shoulder	Project widens shoulder to 50%> of DOT standard	Project widens shoulder to DOT standard		
Point Value	0 Points	20 Points			
Lane Width (20% weight)	Project does not increase lane width	Project widens lane width to DOT standard			

Division's Local Points Assignment:

The result of the application of the ranking methodology will be a list of projects in priority order. The next step is to assign the Division's qualitative points to specific projects. Division 11 has 1,700 points to allocate among Regional projects and 1,700 points to allocate among Division projects.

The Division will assign its 1,700 Regional points among modes and project types according to the following target allocation:

- 1500 points to Highway
- 200 points to Public Transit – Expansion and Facilities

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The Division will assign its 1,700 Division points among modes and project types according to the following target allocation:

- 800 points to Highway
- 200 points to Public Transit – Expansion and Facilities
- 100 points to Bicycle and Pedestrian
- 200 points to Aviation Projects
- 400 points could be assigned to any mode and project type

The Division will assign points within each mode and project type in order of the rankings from above. However exceptions may be made if the project costs more than the funding available in that category, or if the project will not be competitive within the specific category even with the application of qualitative points, or if the project will remain competitive in the absence of assigning qualitative points. Since funding in the Division category is limited, Statewide or Regional projects that cascade down to the Division level may not be considered for Division qualitative points if the project cost is excessive.

Distribution of the unassigned points in the Regional and Division categories will be determined by:

- the number of eligible projects within each level and mode;
- the likelihood of receiving funding through STI considering the amount of funding available within each Division and/or Region;
- limitations set by the STI legislation; and
- geographic and jurisdictional balance.

The specific reasoning behind the allocation of qualitative points will be documented by Division 11 and posted to NCDOT's website.

During the period that the draft point assignment is released for public comment, [Division 11](#) may make further adjustments to the qualitative point assignment recommendation based on the above factors as well as:

- coordination with planning organizations within the Division on the assignment of points; and
- public input and support as evidenced through public comments submitted to NCDOT, Division 11's public workshop, public involvement efforts of local governments, and local referenda.

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Approval of Ranking Points

Division 11 will release the draft Project Priority Ranking and application of qualitative points for public comments and hold a public hearing within the 90 day public comment period between June and August 2014. After review and public comment, Division 11 will finalize the application of qualitative points based upon:

- the number of eligible projects within the Division within each funding mode /project type/category;
- the likelihood of receiving funding through STI considering the amount of funding available within each Division or Region, historical funding levels for the mode, and the normalization limitations that have been adopted;
- the effect that receiving funding for a project may have on the likelihood of other projects being funded in the Division or Region considering the limitations set by the STI legislation;
- geographic and jurisdictional balance;
- coordination with planning organizations within the Division on the assignment of points;
- public input and support as evidenced through public comments submitted to NCDOT, Division 11's public hearing, public involvement efforts of local governments, and local referenda; and
- Division Engineer's knowledge of the transportation needs of their Division.

If the Division varies from the recommended allocation of qualitative points, we will document the rationale and will post on NCDOT's website.

STI will allow us to use our existing resources more efficiently and effectively and help us move forward with important projects that will enhance mobility and revitalize communities throughout the state. The new process encourages us to think from a statewide and regional perspective while also providing flexibility to address local needs.

With this in mind, it is important now more than ever to coordinate with all of the key stakeholders in Division 11. The following is a list of our key stakeholders:

MPO/RPO

Greater Hickory MPO

High Country RPO

Northwest Piedmont RPO

Unifour RPO

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Airports

Ashe County Airport
Avery County Airport
Elkin Municipal Airport
Foothills Regional Airport
Surry County Airport
Wilkes County Airport

Public Transportation Providers

Alleghany In Motion
Ashe County Transportation Authority
Avery County Transportation Authority
Greenways Transit
Wilkes County Transportation Authority
Yadkin Valley Economic Development District

County/Municipal Governments

Alleghany County
Town of Sparta
Ashe County
Towns of Jefferson, Lansing, and West Jefferson
Avery County
Towns of Banner Elk, Beech Mountain, Crossnore, Elk Park, Newland, and Sugar Mountain
Caldwell County
Cities of Hickory and Lenoir
Towns of Cahah's Mountain, Gamewell, Granite Falls, Hudson, Rhodhiss, and Sawmills
Surry County
City of Mount Airy
Towns of Dobson, Elkin, and Pilot Mountain
Watauga County
Towns of Blowing Rock, Boone, and Seven Devils
Wilkes County
Towns of North Wilkesboro, Ronda, and Wilkesboro
Yadkin County
Towns of Boonville, East Bend, Jonesville, and Yadkinville

NCDOT Divisions

Aviation Division
Bicycle & Pedestrian Division
Division of Public Transportation

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Transportation Planning Branch
Highway Division Twelve

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